

The Testosterone Kid

Chapter -15-



Sometime in **1988 Mike Rep** began reading poetry on Monday nights at Larry's bar. Folks would gather to hear the latest crop of up and coming poets then drink themselves legless and stagger home. It was during one of these readings that Mike Rep met **Charles Eric Cicirella**. Charles had moved with his x-girlfriend down to Columbus where she was enrolled in The Ohio State University. They had a small apartment near King Ave and High Street which was not too far from Used Kids Records. Charles had been working on some poems among them **White Nun #2**, and a 30 page poem called, **"Dali's Lair"**. So Rep introduced him to **Jim Shepard** who agreed to publish it on his Iron Press. Jim had been really impressed by Charles and took him under his wing and mentored him. He began telling me about this poet and urged me to record Charles up in my mom's attic on 4th ave. I think at the time I was working with **Arlus Stitch**, **Tommy Jay**, **Hippy Dave** and **Kevyn Kausality** on some projects. To be honest, at that point I wasn't into poetry too much, but that all began to change once I enrolled in college that fall. For weeks all I heard out of Jim's mouth was Cicirella this, or Cicirella that. Jim was driving me crazy. But I couldn't see the reason for his admiration. Then one night at Kroger's grocery store Charles introduced himself to me. He wanted to record with me but I just blew it off. It took awhile for me to see what Jim saw in Charles. So Jim borrowed my teac 4 track and that led **"Batman"** and his new sidekick **"Robin"** to the soft porn **"Game of Sport"** video project. By this time Jim and Roxanne were living on Fairway where V3 had relocated due to the lost of my apartment on Duncan Ave. My legal trouble had forced the move.



Jim was always inviting Charles to work with him during this cycle. Years later on V3's **Negotiate Nothing** CD Charles would invite a Saxophonist **Rusty Stonerock** to solo on the track **"Trouble"**. It was a nice touch. Rudy Smith and I did the basic tracks on drums and synth/bass, then Jim and Charles filled out the tune. Also, after Roxanne left the band, Jim began allowing Charles a guest appearance on V3 shows. There are videos of some of these shows. Then at a V3 show Jim introduced to Charles to **Tommy Jay**. Seeing him wildly performing his poem **"White Jeep"** at **"Bernie's Bagels"** Tommy struck up a friendship with Charles. Anyone who has seen his CBGB's performance with V3 can attest to the volcanic stage presence that Charles is able to project toward an audience. Then finally, **Ron House** got to know Charles because he was always buying records at **Used Kids**. Ron was also into poetry. Charles

would bring Ron, Rep and Jim up for the occasional reading at Larry's bar. Moreover, Jim began to encourage Charles to form his own bands. He took to this like a fish to water. In fact, Charles had enlisted **Mike Rock** to join **Gyro 99** on bass only to have Mike kick Charles out of Gyro 99 after a few gigs. On top of all this, Charles was constantly holding poetry readings at other bars and books stores around Columbus. Then Charles began hanging out at the "*Blake House*" with **Greg Casey** and the two of them played a number of "one off" shows under various band names. Some of these shows were quite lively to said the least. I think it was Jim who christened Charles the "*Testosterone Kid*" for his innate ability to woo women with his poetry. There is something about him that attract women to become romantically involved with Charles. He is truly a silver tongue devil.

Early in 1988 Jim and I recorded a song called "*Survival*". It was a poem by Charles and Ron Goodman which V3 set to music. Also during this time I recorded in my mom's attic 5 other Squidfish projects: "*This City*", "*Land of Dreams*", "*Ireland*", "*I Feel Lost*" and the music for a play I had written called "*Wisdom Snake*". I had become extremely depressed about the world's social order and it's relentless march towards predatory capitalism. It seemed like every aspect of my live revolved around money. From health care to art; from social status to freedom, all of it dehumanized my spiritual quest for enlightenment. This is when the darkness began to take a toll upon being. This is when I first began to think about suicide. And Jim Shepard was already moving in that direction. He worship death. It was the great release from all of the pain of his mother's death so many years before. I believe Jim just wanted to be with his mother again. So meditation was a effective counter-balance to my situation. It washed away all my life's negativity. It kept me focused on my goals. It kept me in the game. Also in 1988 **Arlus** and I began to work on her "**Mouth Full Of Cheesecake**" project which featured Jim, Rudy, Jerry Felty and Tommy Jay.

In the mean time the ground underneath my feet was shaky. My whole attitude began to shift. Everything was uncertain in terms of security. It was obvious that I could no longer use printing as a vocation. I still miss it to this day. But hey, it is what it is. What I needed was to retool education wise. So I began to think about going to college at Columbus State in hopes of being able to transfer to Ohio State later on. To be honest I did have much choice. After about 50 rejection letters and a zillion employment agencies janitorial "jobs", I was becoming extremely depressed. I figured if I had a degree then I could always make it as a pencil pusher. I thought that an office cubical was a better deal than cleaning toilets for a living. I no longer had the happy easy printers life. Plus, very strange experiences began to occur in frequency and intensity. Some of these experiences even challenge my sense of reality. And to complicate the matter my depression was beginning to interfere what my well being.

I remember spending most of my days before I started college studying tarot, numerology, and astrology. The theosophical influence was corrupting my wage slave naivety and the darkness was growing all around me. But Jim instinctively knew that the dark and light were one. Roxanne and I didn't. All of us were sick

of being forced to comply with the social and ethical norms of middle class America. Roxanne was becoming fascinated with tarot and occult spells. With a growing sense of power she split from the safety of Betty's circle and headed in a new direction which in my view led to the selfish use of supernatural forces. It is one thing to protect yourself, but it is another to force your will on others. It was a new direction for her and it led Jim to become very condescending. But once she "*zapped*" Jim a few times and demonstrated her newly acquired powers Jim backed the fuck off. Hence, the song "*Zapped Like a Bolt*" on **Negotiate Nothing**. Roxanne and I both became obsessed with what destiny had in mind for us. But then the terrible day came during one of her tarot readings. She learned that fate would cause Jim and her to go their separate ways and that members of V3 would become very estranged. They both told me that if that happen she would still be in the band. But in the end neither could handle the new situation. Since then I have learned that it is best that one does not know too much of one's future. Why? Because psychic readings rob us of the proper intellectual and spiritual stimulus to evolve and make our own decisions. Psychic readings rob one of their free will. The stars incline but do not compel. Selfishness comes in many unrecognizable forms and tends to interfere with sacrifice and service to others.

By the end of **1988** the tone of my songwriting had shifted with songs like: "*Stage Show Man*", "*Round and Round*", "*Tomorrow Is Today*", and "*Stupid You, Stupid Me*". Hence, the meaning of things had replaced the judgment of things. Even though my personal situation was a mess my creative abilities were flowering. That is when I figured out that the bad always comes with the good. Good and evil are two sides of the same coin. If not for the financial support of **Tommy Jay**, and the creative support from **Jim Shepard** and **Mike Rep**; plus the spiritual help of **Betty** I doubt highly that I could have found my path through the vast darkness.

So in **1989** with a growing sense of urgency **V3** entered into *Kurt Tuckerman's Studio 900* on 5th ave to begin the **Psychic Dancehall** sessions. It would later be released on the **Ropeburn** label in 1991. Also, around this time we recorded the **Earth Muffin 7"** for Tom Lax's **Slitbreeze** label in 1991. On the Psychic Dancehall and Earth Muffin records it was Jim and I who put the project together. Jim would focus on the artwork and songwriting, and I would focus on the songwriting and engineering. Then Jim released on his **Iron Press** label the **Monsters Of Hollywood EP** with seven different silk screened covers. At the same time I think Mike Rep released his **No Age** compilation cassette "**You Are You**". Shortly before Rep's cassette, **V3** had release our "**Unbroken Silence**" cassette on Jim's **Iron Press** label in 1989. V3 was getting noticed. It was weird because **Great Plains**, **Scrawl** and the **Screaming Urge** had sucked most of the oxygen out of the room at that point.

Jim had become pen pals with **Tom Lax** and began to send him letter tapes. At the time, both Jim and Rep were working at G.O. Coin vending company which serviced all the jukeboxes in the central Ohio area. Jim had gotten the Earth Muffin EP on the cafeteria jukebox at Columbus State College. Unfortunately,

when the evangelicals heard V3's EP they successfully lobbied the Administration to have it promptly removed on moral grounds. I never really understood their problem. The EP was harmless but for some reason it really pissed off these so-called Christians. The Evangelicals' cash flow was dependent on their "*bullshit idea*" that Jesus died to make amends for your sins. This is in conflict with the notion of cause and effect. But the occult truth was he "*pretended to die*" for the idea of unconditional love. After his mission was over he moved his family to France to get away from the Jewish racist. But it was a business model too good for the evangelicals to pass up. Then after the Earth Muffin blow up Mike Rep began dating the same woman that local artist Charles Wince was dating and this led to a confrontation at Larry's bar. Sherry, the woman in question, in my view, must have been playing both ends against the middle. Anyhow, the story goes that Mr. Wince pulled out a gun on the unsuspecting Repski who judiciously beat feet out of the Larry's bar establishment. This is a second-hand account but I surmised a grain of truth to the incident. In the meantime I had received a green talisman from my friend Bill who was taking a 2-year sabbatical in New Zealand from his pharmacologist gig.

Bill had been dating this blond who was pressing him hard to get married. So, to duck the situation and clear his head he parked his state license and went to New Zealand where he met a shaman tribesman. After explaining my legal problems to the shaman a green stone talisman was crafted and sent to me with instructions on how to wear it. Needless to say that on the very day that the legal dispute was settled with Gale King the amulet mysteriously disappeared from around my neck. Not sure how that happened. One minute it was around my neck the next it was gone like a Nixon file. If the talisman was made from etheric matter, and not solid physical matter, that would explain it. A talisman made from pure etheric matter and brought down into a solid physical state always returns back into the etheric state.

Around **April of 1989** the Master **Djwhal Khul** (D.K.) led me to study the works of Alice A. Bailey. I was led to a local book store where I was able to obtain a copy of their book called "**Prophecies**". It was a very hard read but an eye opener. Then around **May of 1989** Roxanne and I went to Betty's psychic fair at the Holiday Inn to get a special "*Past Lives*" reading. For these sort of readings Betty had made special arrangements with a very competent past life reader. Once there I was instructed to lay down on a floor mat with the male psychic sitting next to me in a "*shared deep meditative state*". Suddenly the sights and sounds of ancient Egypt came rushing into our minds. We both saw, smelled and heard the same events in real time. It was like going to the movie with a friend. He began to ask me questions about what we were seeing. From his questioning it emerged that Betty, Roxanne, Jim and I had shared this lifetime back in ancient Egypt. Jim had been the leader of the military. He had been tasked with defending the nation from an invading force. Betty was a high priestess of the temple and Roxanne was her assistant priestess. Roxanne and Jim had been dating. I was a gatekeeper tasked with supervising the slaves and allowing access into the temple. I used to beat Gale King and Vicky a lot. They didn't like being temple slaves or the work it involved. Also I received information about my son and

daughter's past life. Anyway, Jim was killed in battle and didn't come back. Roxanne was heart broken over Jim's death. Then the invaders over ran our temple and set fire to the city. Every body ran for their life's. I don't know what happen to the others but I fled the city. Then invaders tracked me down to a small cave and speared me in my back and I died. That was not fun! Reviewing that was a bitch. I have a birthmark on my back that was carried over into this life from the event. The reading really explained to me my current "Karma" with V3, Vicky and Betty. It explained the dynamics of my relationships and I sought to make amends. I was beginning to understand who I was and why I was on this earth from my soul perspective. It opened many closed doors in my perception. The memory block were lifted. Once again a creative bust of songwriting came afterwards with tunes like: *"The Living Fate"*, *"Jenny Blue"*, *"If You Can See Me"*, *"Rapping Rudy"*, *"Point Of Decision"*, and *"Rich Beyond The Dreams of Avarice"* and **V3's** *"The Voices Of Men"* *"I Heard It"* and *"Va Va Va-rooom"*. I was on a roll and breaking new ground with the music. And it was around this cycle that Tom and I formed our **"JayFish"** songwriting partnership. That partnership would yield many gems in the years to come. Yes, one door had closed on my past but many better doors had opened. Even in the darkness I was moving in the right direction.

Then on **September 27th 1989** Tommy Jay, Kelly, Me and my daughter went to Cleveland to see the Rollings Stones *Steel Wheels Tour*. That was fun. Next I took a greyhound bus out to San Francisco for 2 weeks just before the October 17th earthquake. A few hours after I had left town the earthquake had destroyed the marina distinct along with the Oakland Bay Bridge (Interstate 80). I was on the bridge about 10 hour before it fell into the bay. I could have been killed. When I got back to Columbus Betty called me to say that her "Max" was coming to her home in Bexley Ohio to do healing on about 50 sick people. During his time here I saw Max stick his hand into my belly and reach into my heart and pull out some fatty meat and drop it into a bowl. There were heaps of blood bandages stack up in the room. There were bowls of medicines, incense and candles. Then Max went to work on me. I could "feel and see" his hand inside my body moving around. It was real weird. And there was a very bright kind of fog inside the operating room that Betty and Max had set up. There was a cue of about 10 very sick people waiting to see Max in the next room. Most of them had cancer. All of them were in terrible shape. Max said that in a few cases he was not allowed to heal certain patients due to their karma. He could only give temporary relief. The others he would pull tumors out of their bodies and pitch it into a medical trash can for disposal. The waiting room was full of a cloud like phenomena. It is the same kind of vibration I get when ever I get close to a landed UFO. Everyone got very stoned from being close to this "holy man". It was like smoking the best weed in your life surrounded by a shining fog that made it hard to see. Moreover, it took many years for the hair to grow back from the spiritual incision on my belly.

Afterwards, Roxanne grew increasing distressed about her and Jim fate. After the psychic surgeries she withdrew completely from Betty's circle. This began and increasing cycle of friction between her and Jim. And I was caught between

them. For my part I released my **"Shitty Hits. Vol -1-"** cassette that fall. It was a compilation of songs I had accumulated and I wanted to clear the decks before moving on musically. By **January of 1990** I was bogged down with college but still manage to preform with V3 and record. At the time Jim had hooked up with the **Ropeburn label** who had released the **"Vertical Slit...And Beyond"** CD. It had a few V3 tracks but for the most part focused on Jim's history with Vertical Slit. Also we began doing shows with new bands like **"Pica Huss"** and **"The New Bomb Turks"**. At the time they were and up and coming acts. Between classes that year I recorded a batch of new songs: *"The Living Fate"*, *"The Color of Hope"*, *"Pinecone"*, *"Another Guy"*, *"Shit Happens"*, *"Green Eyes"*, *"Stars"*, *"Holes"*, *"Wedding Bells"*, *"Army Logic"* and *"Street People"*. Once again I was able to explore new ground in my songwriting. When Jim heard *"Street People"* he renamed it *"My Neighborhood"* and re-released it on V3's **Negotiate Nothing CD**. Also I did a revised version off the **Nashville, In Nashville** LP of *"It's True, You Can Only Take What Life Hands You"*. At this point Jim had become real good at shopping others for ideas. Jim was very ambitious about getting signed to a major label. Hell, everybody in cowtown was too. Then one day Jim said to me, *"Squid you need to hear these records"*. It was the **Dukes of the Stratosphere** 25 O'clock and Psonic Psunspot LPs. Plus **Brain Eno's** *"Music for Airports"*. When I heard Eno's Music For Airports I said to myself *"I can do that"*. The Songs *"Stars"* and *"Holes"* are the direct result of Eno's influence on my music. However, due to the frantic pace of my songwriting output I had once again had accumulated a huge backlog of songs. To deal with the backlog I released **"The Wonder Years"** 7 Cassette Box Set. At the time I thought it was important to get it out to the public. It was a mistake. But as usual most of my work was over looked, or totally ignored. So, it all worked out. The fact was that others in my peer group overshadow my writing. Which was a good thing because it allowed me to develop behind the curtain. But Jim, Rep and Tommy were beginning to become aware my growing output. Most of it was filler with the exception of a few gems every now and then.

January 15th of 1990, for winter break from college I took a greyhound bus out to San Francisco for a 2rd trip to hang out with the drummer/painter **Larry Altvater**. He had been in the Columbus Ohio bands. **Phantom Limb**, **Screaming Urge** and **Kevyn & The Kasualities**. Larry had just had an exhibition at San Francisco's main art gallery and was working with some record labels developing LP art work. Arlus Stitch had told me it would be alright to stay with him but Arlus never informed him I was coming. Poor Larry was very surprised to have me show up on his door step asking to crash on his floor. Arlus had simply forgot to call him. But Larry was gracious and let me crash. But this would turn into the strangest trip I've ever been on. On the bus ride to Indianapolis this *sex therapist* claiming to be a *southern professor* came on board. He was traveling out west to some university to take on a new teaching assignment. There were only 3 women and him and on the bus at that point. Then he began to lecture all of us about the proper methods for sex. The women were hanging on his every word. He informed the girls that his former female roommate had *stolen* all his clothing. Not sure how that works? From his woeful tale, he was sewing some very pitiful I.D. Labels he had made into all his new

clothing. He seemed very determined not to let that kind of shit happen again. He reminded me of a small fat Truman Capote with a black eye and busted lip. It seems that his eye and lip was a parting gift from his x-roommate. She may have been a sports boxer at the university they worked at. The 3 women on the bus were enchanted by his rap. As their arousal grew with each passing mile the group decide to take a break from their journey and spend the night at a motel 6 together. I was glad to see them go because all his sex talk had given me a terrible erection which I could no longer hide. This hillbilly definitely was a babe magnet. A silver tongue devil no doubt! He knew how to get laid. I'll give him that! Then things got even stranger.

As the greyhound pulled into Saint Louis two young nice look college students got on board and headed for the last row of seats behind me. They didn't seem to know each other but began to chatter. Once again they began to talk and the subject of sex was broached. Then he open up a bottle of vodka and mixed it with coke. After about 15 minuets of moaning foreplay she pulls her dress up and they started to fuck in the seats right behind my head. That is some really hard shit to ignore and put old Squidly under loads of stress. By this point I want to kick his ass and take over. The bus driver must have been aware what was happening. But he seem to not want to deal with it. From Saint Louis to Salt Lake City I had a nerve racking boner from listening to their moans and groans. Then they got off the bus before we hit the Rockie mountains and I felt the stress had been lifted. WTF? Who are these people? What did I get myself into? When I pulled into San Francisco I had a few hours to kill so I rode out to the golden gate and discovered this gay beach right where the nuclear subs enter into the bay. I left my suite case on the beach and began to explore the area. It was about 10 AM on a weekend so there were only a few naked gay men walking around. They seem to take pride in doing their dong displays. It was almost like a game of who has the nicest cock? Most of them had hards on which really wasn't my thing. Then somebody yelled *"Hey, is that your suitcase floating out to sea"*? I looked and sure enough my luggage was underneath the Golden Gate Bridge. So I jumped into the bay and swam my ass off and retrieved my suitcase as a few naked gay cheered me on. When I got back to the beach I was told that the bay is a very dangerous place to go swimming. It is a "No No". So there I was sea weed drenched and stinking of diesel oil from the passing cargo vessels. I made my way to the bus stopped and everybody thought I was nuts. I ask the driver for help and he was kind. He let me off at the nearest laundry mat and I spent the rest of the day washing the stink off. People were staring. They were trying to figure out why in the hell I wanted to go swimming in the bay. I was trying to figure it out myself! They told me of the safer beaches I could go to if I wanted to go surfing. Years later I would write a song called, *"Ding Dong Beach"* from this experience.

So after hanging out with Larry and smoking weed on the highest point in San Francisco, it was time to get back for school. I was told that this place was were **Jerry Garcia** like to hang out and smoke weed. It had a spectacular view of the city. Totally breathtaking. But the ride back was even more dangerous. A cartel mule, with a backpack full of drugs, got on the bus at Pasadena. He chatted me

up for a few hours then reveled to me the content of his back pack. Holy Shit! It was full of coke, weed, heroin, downers, speed and hash. It must have been at least 500,000 dollars worth of felony drug charges! I became very uncomfortable sitting next to him but there was no where to go. The bus was full. When we got to Truckee, California we had a hour layover. So we walked about 10 minuets out from the gas station into the starry night and smoked some of his hash. This really calm me down. It was pitch black out there in the cold desert night air. Stars spread all over the place. Very peaceful. What he didn't tell me was that the **FBI** was tracking him. About 20 miles before we got to Salt Lake City he asked the driver to let him off at a cross road where his ride was waiting. I was happy to see him go. But when we pull into the Greyhound Station at Salt Lake there was about 25 FBI agents and 4 German Shepard drug dogs waiting. They ordered everyone to stay in their seat as the dogs did a drug sweep of our bus. Of course the dogs kept coming to me and licking my hands. Oh Shit! The Feds didn't find a thing but they knew I had smoke some weed. So they let me go. I hate talking to the cops stoned. It is not a good place for your head to be in. And at every bus terminal between Salt Lake and Indianapolis the FBI kept searching the buses for the drug mule. Somehow the drug mule knew what the FBI was going to do. Maybe there was leak inside the cops? Finally we pulled into Columbus and I was so happy to get home that I slept a whole day to recover from the ordeal. That was the last time I took a greyhound bus. From then on I would only fly. No more Greyhound buses. Fuck that!

When I got back to Columbus State the ivory towered educators hammered me with their we know what is best for your curriculum bullshit. Both OSU and Columbus State insisted that a philosopher should be schooled in logic and rationalism. Both institutions focused on solving mankind's pressing moral and intellectual concerns. But Betty and Max had taught me **"Occult Philosophy"** was the master key that open all the doors of human existence. They taught me that the student must learn what he is, where he came from, and what his real purpose is here on earth. They also taught me: *the occult cycles of time, the laws of reincarnation & karma, the powers of the soul, how to establish two way communication with one's own soul, tarot cards, voice vibration, the occult powers of light and sound, the powers and uses of stones, water and herbs, occult history, magnetic healing, low level magic systems, the 7 principles of man and nature, how to safely do psychic readings, the root-races of man, astrology, numerology, the astral and etheric realms of being, the kybalion, and the many uses of occult science.* Betty taught that there must be a 3 way marriage between mind, emotion and soul. Without that you are doom to reincarnate. Maybe that's why she name her church **Trinity New Age Light?** Some are born into this marriage, others like me had to fight for every scrap of knowledge. It was clear to me that the professors where mainly concerned in turn out "replacement parts" for the predatory capitalist system. Spiritual evolvment was not on the syllabus. They reminded me of a gerbil on a treadmill. The mental movement was endless but it led to nowhere and ended in exhaustion. All through my college career I had to pay lip service to their ignorance in order to hold onto my funding. In truth I kept my *"iconoclastic ways"* hidden. In order to gain the "pencil pusher gig" I had to keep my mouth shut. It all reminded me of

my Nashville days. Shut up and think like we taught you. Once again I was out of step my my peers and trying to fit it. It was the square peg and round hole syndrome.

By **February of 1990** I had recorded 4 new songs: *Star of India*, *Venusian War Machine*, *Little Chinese Man*, and *Yes/No*. *Star of India* was about **Larry Altvater's** girlfriend. *Venusian War Machine* was a tribute to the British TV show **Doctor Who**. *Little Chinese Man* was joke about **Ron House** trying to become rich and famous as a songwriter. And *Yes/No* was a anthropology study on human consent and dissent behavior. I was having big fun at this point. But once again I could feel the winds of change blowing. Jim and Roxanne where pulling away from each other by **March of 1990**. Something just wasn't right between them and it was beginning to effect Rudy and I. College had shielded me a lot from their conflict and I didn't want to know about all the bullshit going on between them. Other friends would try to confront me about Shepard's relationship and I was always put in the uncomfortable position of having to defending them. Songwriters tend to leave a history of their personal experiences in the words of their songs; and Jim and Roxanne were no exception. No doubt the reader can glean more information about their situation from their words than I could ever express or want to publish. But underneath all the bullshit and warfare their was a deep love between them that is probably best left to the professionals to decipher.

That March 16th we did show and it was nice to see all our old friends show up. Then on May 9th **V3** did another show followed by the May 24th **Screaming Urge** gig with **V3** opening. It had taken a long time to get to that point and I was somewhat proud. Next, Betty called to tell me Max was coming back for another healing session on August 16th 17th & 18th. By that point I had become an old hand at the strangeness happening in Betty's home when Max was in town. I think Roxanne's last show with **V3** may have been August 15th 1990 the day before Max arrived. Soon after that Jim kicked her out of **V3**. That was somewhat unexpected. I got a phone call from a highly distraught Jim who had been sleeping in his car for 2 days. He was in very bad shape. Disheveled and needing a serious bath Jim had found a love letter in her purse from a security guard whom she had been working at the time. "*He never saw it coming*". The letter was sexually explicit and it really freak out Jimbo. He was a mess. Then he issued me and Rudy an ultimatum. Either it was him or Roxanne. Their relationship was over. Of course Roxanne was shocked when she was told she was kicked out of V3. She thought they still could work together. Their agreement had always been that if they broke up she would still be in the band. So I had the unpleasant task of watching my two best friends bust up. They had become bitter enemies. They did everything in their power to hurt one another. I had been there. I really didn't consider the effects of my divorce from Kathy would have upon our kids. Their situation was helpless. I think the last songs V3 recorded with Roxanne was "**I Heard It**" and "**The Voices Of Men**". There was nothing I could do as I watched his family disintegrate. We decided V3 would take a few months off so that Jim could find a place to live. He tried to hold on to his job but after a few months he was let go after his boss found out he was

selling used jukebox CDs for extra money. No doubt there wasn't enough money available to fund two households. So, for the fall of 1990 I just went to classes and kept on recording in my mom's attic. To give Kathy some child support for the kids I worked at the Ohio State Fair from the 24th through the 31st in 1990 and 1991. I just turn the checks over to her. I felt so guilty about being in college. There wasn't much I could do at that point. Then around November of 1990 I went to see Roxanne and discovered she had moved out. The house was empty. I couldn't believe it. When I called Jim about it he didn't believe me. But after checking for himself he became very depressed. What followed was a cycle of darkness I do not wish to convey. For the next few years all he would say was *"I'll never see my kids again"*. And I always would reply, *"Oh yes you will"*. Also, it was around this time **Rudy Crash n' Burn's** wife started to cheat on him. One-day he went in for a routine medical check and his doctor informed him he had a severe case of vernal warts. WTF? They had to use a Laser to remove them and I know the treatment made him sore. Next, a hurt and angry Rudy filed for divorce and moved her ass out. People wondered about it and I had to endure much laughter. After their split I used to run into musician's who had slept with her while they were married. I never really understood why they took so much pride in it. But, I guess pussy will make a blind man buy a colored TV set! For some strange reason Rudy made it a point to tell everybody he met about his dejection. WTF? Shut up! I tried to get him to keep his mouth shut, but he was in so much emotional pain about her betrayal it was simply of no use. That's when I figure out that the fucking you get ain't like the fucking you take.

That Xmas of 1990 Jim and I had a lot to talk about. We began to make plans. He was ready to start **V3** back up. Jim wanted another bass player and to move me over to guitar but I said no. So we ended up as a trio. He had moved in with **Rick Casper** who had the **Dead Cat** studio in his basement on the East Side of Columbus. Casper's band use the spacious 4 room studio but there was tons of space for V3 to set up shop. Rick was moving away from being in a band and had created his own NASCAR advertising firm. He did all the photo and art work for our **Negotiate Nothing** CD. The control room used a Otari mx 5050 1/2" reel to reel 8-track which then got mix-down to a Otari 2 track reel or cassette. The old Victorian mansion had 5 floors but the upper three were undergoing remodeling. Jim was living on the 2rd floor which overlooked the stone porch roof view of the street. The house was huge and drafty. During this time Jim ran through a number of willing girlfriends until he happen to hit upon **Val Seely** who use to be a regular at CBGB's. Jim joined their band **"Creature"** as a side project to V3. The band consisted of **Val Seely/vocal/guitar**, **Bill Shuster/bass** and **Jim Shepard/Lead guitar**. On Jan 6th 1991 Creature recorded 5 songs in Val's living room with **Lizard McGee** as engineer. Also, on Jan 11th 1991 I began the **Hippy Dave** Sessions. It was quickly followed on Jan 22th 1991 by **The Florida Fort Lauderdale** session with my old True Believers bass player **The General**. I went down to visit and recorded with him. Then in February 1991 Jim released **"Amsterdam"** which featured **Jim, Rudy Crash n' Burn Smith, Me** and the wily **Eric Svensson**. By that time V3 was well into our **Negotiate Nothing** sessions. Then suddenly Rick Casper bailed as our engineer. His advertising firm was skyrocketing and he needed to devote more time to it. So, Casper showed

Jim the basics and he took the project over. It was Jim and Rudy who did most of the mix-downs for the CD. I don't think Rick really understood what Jim wanted. Maybe he figured it was a waste of time? I was bogged down with sessions, gigs and classes and didn't have the time to devote to the mix-down cycle. But I knew Jim would make me look good to the public. My friends always cover for me. They know how to polish the turd! Jim and I both were very experimental at that point. But I had to keep pulling Jim back to our strange pop sensibilities on Negotiate Nothing. Jim knew he needed that "pop" to counter-balance all the experimental stuff. We were out to gum up the works and boy did we succeed.

That March of 1991 I did the Tommy Jay Barn Sessions. We covered the **Rolling Stones** song "*Complicated*" which had Tommy Jay on vocals/drums, Jerry Felty vocal, The General on bass & vocal, and Me on vocal and guitar. Next we covered Jim Shepard's "*Idi Amin*" and Mike Reps' "*Jennifer*". Those covers had Tommy on drums, the General on bass, and me on vocal and guitar. When I got back to Casper's studio on the east side Jim played me some of the Negotiate Nothing mix-downs he had been working on. That is when I knew we were doing something very different yet still very poppy. We knew this record was going to get us attention. It had a very interesting feel to it. The approach was unlike anything I had ever done. The whole thing was one takes married to ab-libs in the studio. Once the music was done Jim just got drunk and adlibbed the words. Boom! It worked. He even brought in **Bob Dickie** (*The Strapping Field Hands*) and **Charles Cicirella** (*Root Cellar*) plus **Rusty Stonerock**. Probably the hardest part of the project for Jim and Rudy to overcome was the song flow. They gave me a number of versions until one day they hit pay dirt. It was done.

That April of 1991 saw me recorded "*Advance to the Next Step*" which was a philosophical comparison of Dr. Martin Luther King and Socrates approach to truth. That song heralded a change in my writing. From that point on I became more Theosophical and less observational in my art. I also recorded a Rolling Stone cover called "*Whose Been Sleeping Here?*" I guess it reminded me of Jim and Rudy's troubles. The on April 23rd of 1991 **Johnny Thunders** of the **New York Dolls** died. I had seen them years before and was shocked by the news. Then towards the end of the month I got word that Roxanne had moved near Nashville Tennessee. I told Jim but he didn't think it was true. When May of 1991 rolled around Jim, Rudy and I would do shows with the new Columbus bands **Pica Huss**, **New Bomb Turks** and **Jerry Wick's** band **Gaunt**. At the time these bands were pretty much unknown. **Jerry Wick** and **Bela Koe-Krompecher** had become clerks at Use Kids Records. They were working along side **Rep**, **Ron** and **Dan Dow**. To me those guys represent the 2nd wave of Columbus punk following in the footsteps of **The True Believers** and **Screaming Urge**. Unlike the rest of us the **New Bomb Turks** all had bachelor degrees and that sort of comes out in their art. Like **The Doors** and **Queen** they knew what they were doing. Within a few years they were touring nationally and by 1996 were signed to major labels. I know Bela and Wick became regulars at Larry's bar. I would see them there getting drunk with Ron House, Jim Shepard and Mike Rep. As 1991 was coming to an end I headed out to Harrisburg for a Jayfish session in

October. I wanted to see if the ab-lib approach would work for JayFish. Tom and I recorded a Great Depression Era poem called *"Bacon, Beans and Gravy"*. This time the approach didn't work. Actually, the song has never seen the light of day as far as I know. It was a LP filler type of tune. Nothing magical. Just two dudes drunk and high fooling around. Jim always use to say *"don't worry about it. Just throw it at the wall and if it sticks use it"*. I still embrace that approach all these years later. Song flow is always an after thought.

Finally, by December of 1991 my year ended in sessions with **Arlus Stitch**, **Kevyn Kausality** and **Hippy Dave**. By that time Arlus's heroin addiction was beginning to cause her social problems. She began to steal from her friends to support her habit. **Greg Casey** tried to get her in treatment. And, for a time it worked. He was employed as a drug counselor for the State of Ohio but Arlus always seemed to relapsed after a few months. Then I got word that Greg was becoming addicted to cocaine. The State had order Greg, who had a Masters degree in psychology, into his own treatment program. It didn't work because Greg was one of the people who had designed the program in the first place. Unfortunately, by 1995, the State of Ohio had forced Greg into a disability retirement, and for the rest of his life he struggled with his addiction. I guess it is common for a drug counselor to become addicted. So that winter I took stock of the situation. I knew that the old days were gone. I could feel the approaching *"newness"* coming into view. The question was; *"how wild will this V3 ride get"*? I thought I was familiar with crazy. But one has to live through the notion of *"God-smack"* to really grasp it's experience. The common tide that lifts all boats was about to hit old cowtown pretty hard and I was right in the middle of it.

